

9 Months to Get Ready



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First Month

Weeks 1–4

Your Baby

- Family traits were set when you got pregnant.
- The father's sperm determined the baby's sex.
- The brain and the nervous system are forming.
- The heart and lungs are forming, too.
- Tiny spots for ears, eyes and nose are showing.
- Arm and leg buds are forming.
- The baby is growing inside a sac of amniotic (am-ne-AH-tick) fluid (bag of water).
- Your baby will be about 1/4 inch long at the end of this month.



Your Body

- You were two weeks pregnant when you missed your first period.
- You were six weeks pregnant when you missed your second period.
- The placenta (pla-SEN-ta) is forming and making hormones that prepare your baby for an exchange of nutrients between the mother and fetus.
- You may have nausea (“morning sickness”) any time of the day.
- You may feel tired.
- Your breasts begin to feel tender.
- Your uterus (womb) is growing larger, but you can not feel it.
- You have not gained weight or changed body size this month.
- You may need to urinate (pee) more.



Drawings illustrate relative size of fetal growth only. They are not scientifically accurate representations of fetal development.

Your Responsibility

- Make an appointment to start prenatal care.
- Check with your health care provider or clinic before taking any prescribed or over-the-counter medicine.
- Avoid X-rays while you are pregnant.
- Avoid smoking, drinks with caffeine (colas, teas, coffee) and junk food.
- DO NOT use cocaine, heroin, marijuana, or other street drugs.
- DO NOT drink beer, wine, wine coolers, whiskey, or any other alcoholic drinks.
- Eat three balanced meals a day or six small meals.
- Small meals will help if you have an upset stomach. Don't go for long periods of time without food.
- Eat protein (meats-not fried, beans, fish, eggs, nuts, etc.).
- Talk with your family and/or friends about your feelings during this pregnancy.
- Stick to a diet naturally high in folic acid (oranges, melons and daily green vegetables).
- Decide how you will tell your family, friends, health care provider and employer about your pregnancy.
- Find out if you have insurance (Medicaid, Tricare, private).

Your Tests

_____Pregnancy tests

_____May have other tests such as blood tests and urinalysis

Notes:

Second Month

Weeks 5–8

Your Baby

- This is a key month in your baby's growth.
- The eyes and ears are forming.
- Facial features are forming.
- The head is large, since the brain grows faster than any other organs.
- Cartilage, skin and muscles are starting to shape your baby's body.
- The umbilical (um-BIL-uh-kul) cord has formed.
- Fingers, toes and fingernails are forming.
- The stomach, liver and kidneys are developing.
- The heart is beating.
- Your baby will weigh about 1/2 to 1 ounce and be about 1 inch long by the end of the month.



Your Body

- You may gain a pound or two during this month.
- Your waist size is likely to increase.
- Your breast size increases, and the nipples begin to darken.
- The uterus may feel like a small lump above your pubic bone.
- The uterus is softer, rounder and larger now.
- As it crowds the bladder, you may urinate more often.
- The placenta is growing.
- More hormones are being produced.
- The tissues around the vagina become bluish as an increased blood supply nourishes the baby.
- The vaginal discharge becomes thicker, whiter and stickier.
- You may be more tired and have less energy this month.
- Nausea (morning sickness) may still occur and it may be more common in the morning.



Drawings illustrate relative size of fetal growth only. They are not scientifically accurate representations of fetal development.

Your Responsibility

- Begin your regular checkups this month.
- Ask for prenatal test results: blood type and Rh factor, anemia, blood pressure, urine, weight.
- Ask about any medications you are taking.
- Get prescribed vitamins and iron, if needed.
- Eat a good diet including whole grains, proteins, fruits and vegetables.
- Take your prescribed vitamins.
- Drink six to eight glasses of water each day.
- Avoid cigarettes, alcohol, caffeine, junk foods, and/or medications unless prescribed by your doctor.
- Avoid paints (except latex), pesticides and aerosol sprays.
- Exercise: Walk, swim or bike 15 minutes daily.
- Try to enroll in prenatal classes.
- Discuss feelings, ideas or worries that you may have about the effects of pregnancy with your partner.
- Ask good friends or family about their experiences in the first few months of pregnancy.
- Find out if you have insurance for maternity and infant health services.

Your Tests

_____ Blood tests

_____ Blood type and Rh factor

_____ Hemoglobin and/or hematocrit (for anemia)

_____ Rubella titer (see if susceptible to German measles)

_____ Blood test for syphilis

_____ Other tests as needed

_____ Blood pressure

_____ Weight

_____ Urine

_____ Sugar (check for diabetes)

_____ Protein (check for kidney disease or toxemia)

_____ Bacteria (check for bladder or kidney infection)

_____ Pap smear

_____ Gonorrhea culture

_____ Complete physical examination

_____ Pelvic examination to check for size and shape of your pelvis

Notes:

Third Month

Weeks 9–12

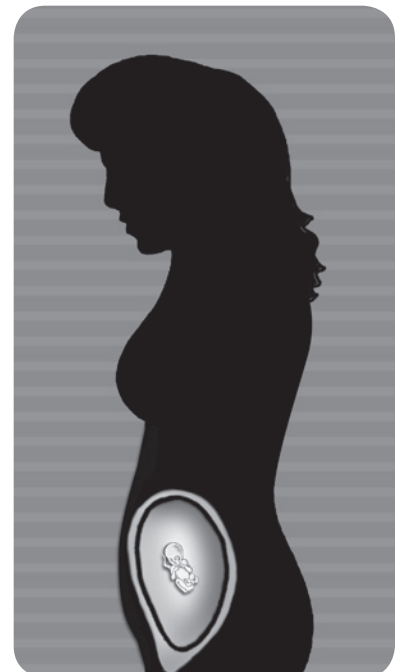
Your Baby

- Your baby is still too tiny to feel any movement.
- The ears, arms, hands, fingers, legs, feet and toes will be completely formed this month.
- Your baby's vocal cords are formed.
- The taste buds are forming.
- The head can be held up.
- Reflex movements allow your baby's elbows to bend, legs to kick and fingers to form a fist.
- The sex of the baby is easy to tell now, if you could see inside the uterus.
- The heart beat is 120 to 160 beats per minute.
- Blood is now going through the cord to the baby.
- About one cup of amniotic fluid surrounds your baby.
- The baby's kidneys will begin to function.
- By the end of the month your baby will weigh about 1 ounce and be about 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 inches long.



Your Body

- You will begin to feel better by the end of this month.
- You will be sick to your stomach less.
- You will begin to feel hungrier.
- You will have more energy.
- You may have gained about 5 pounds since you became pregnant.
- The placenta is now formed.
- You may be constipated. Drinking water or fruit juice and eating raw vegetables will help.
- You may be happy or sad for no reason.
- If your legs or feet swell, sit down at different times during the day and elevate (raise) your feet.



Your Responsibility

- Get your prenatal checkup this month.
- Ask about the changes in your body that worry you.
- Ask about your test results.
- Ask about your first ultrasound, if needed.
- Eat three balanced meals daily.
- Eat whole grains, proteins, fruits and vegetables.
- Drink 8-10 glasses of liquid (water, milk, fruit juices) a day.
- DO NOT SMOKE.
- DO NOT drink beer, wine, wine coolers, whiskey, or any other alcoholic drinks.
- DO NOT use cocaine, heroin, marijuana, or other street drugs.
- Take only medicines prescribed by your health care provider.
- Avoid using paints, pesticides and spray cans.
- Exercise: Walk, swim or bike about 15 minutes daily.
- Share your good and bad feelings about having a baby with family, friends and/or health care provider.

Your Tests

_____ Blood pressure

_____ Weight

_____ Urine

_____ Height of fundus

(Fundal height is the distance from your pubic bone to the fundus, which is the upper, rounded top of your uterus. The measurement of the fundal height is taken on the outside of the abdomen with a tape measure and can tell the growth of both the uterus and the baby each month.)

_____ Blood tests (as needed)

Notes:

Fourth Month

Weeks 13–17

Your Baby

- Your baby starts a growth spurt in length and weight.
- Hair begins to grow.
- Hair appears on the baby's head.
- Downy hair called lanugo (lan-NOO-goh) covers the body.
- Eyebrows and eyelashes start to grow.
- The skin starts to fill out with fat.
- The kidneys make urine.
- Your baby enjoys moving about in the amniotic sac.
- The amniotic fluid increases a lot this month.
- This month marks the midpoint in pregnancy.
- The heartbeat will be heard.
- A special stethoscope called a doppler will be used.
- Your baby will be about 7 inches long and weigh about 4 ounces by the end of the month.



Your Body

- Your pregnancy is beginning to show.
- You gain 1/2 to 1 pound a week for a total gain of 2 to 4 pounds this month.
- Your nipples, the area around them and the line on your abdomen linea negra (LIN-ee-uh NAY-gruh) may darken.
- Your placenta releases hormones that help to soften some of your joints and muscles to make labor and delivery easier.
- You are less tired.
- You may begin to find you enjoy being pregnant.
- You may be hungry more often.
- You may feel cravings for some foods.
- The chance of urinary tract infection may increase this month.
- Your uterus will be just below your navel by the end of the month.



Your Responsibility

- Get your prenatal checkup this month.
- Eat three balanced meals a day with healthy snacks in between.
- Take your prenatal vitamins and iron.
- Ask your health care provider about a test for neural tube defects.
- Avoid smoking, drinks with caffeine (colas, teas, coffee) and junk food.
- DO NOT drink beer, wine, wine coolers, whiskey, or any other alcoholic drinks.
- DO NOT use cocaine, heroin, marijuana or other street drugs.
- Stick to a diet naturally high in folic acid (oranges, melons and dark green vegetables).
- Exercise: Walk, swim or bike 15 minutes daily.
- Learn and practice the Kegel and pelvic rock exercises.
- Share your good and bad feelings about having a baby with family, friends and/or health care provider.
- Drink 8-10 glasses of liquid (water, milk, fruit juices) a day.

Your Tests

_____ Blood pressure
_____ Weight
_____ Urine
_____ Height of fundus
_____ Fetal heart tones
_____ Blood tests (as needed)

Notes:

Fifth Month

Weeks 18–22

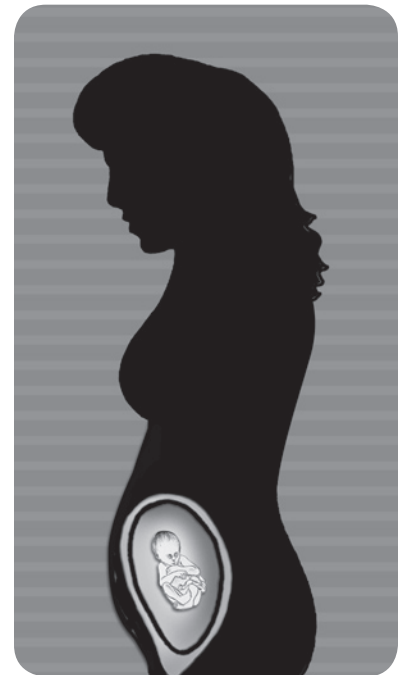
Your Baby

- Your baby will begin to move a lot.
- You will feel the baby's arms and legs move.
- There are times when the baby is active and times when the baby is calm.
- The skin is protected by a white cheesy coating as the baby moves in the amniotic fluid.
- The skin is wrinkled and red.
- The skin is filling out with fat that will help the baby keep warm after birth.
- The eyelids are still closed.
- The fingernails are growing.
- The heartbeat is easy to hear with a fetoscope (a baby stethoscope).
- Your baby will be about 8-12 inches long and weigh about 1/2 to 1 pound by the end of the month.



Your Body

- You feel well most of the time.
- People may tell you that you look good.
- You probably will gain about 1/2 to 1 pound a week or about 2 to 4 pounds a month.
- Your breasts grow larger, softer and the veins start to show.
- A yellowish-white fluid called colostrum (kuh-LOSS-trum) may leak from your breasts. This is preparation for breast feeding your baby.
- You can feel the uterus at the navel or just above.
- Constipation may be a problem until the end of your pregnancy. Increase your fluids, eat more fruits and vegetables and walk more.
- Your hair may feel thicker and more oily.
- You may become easily upset due to hormone changes. This can happen almost anytime during pregnancy.



Your Responsibility

- Continue your prenatal checkups.
- Eat three balanced meals a day with healthy snacks in between.
- Drink 8-10 glasses of water, milk or fruit juices every day.
- Avoid smoking, drinks with caffeine (colas, teas, coffee) and junk food.
- DO NOT use cocaine, heroin, marijuana, or other street drugs.
- DO NOT drink beer, wine, wine coolers, whiskey, or any other alcoholic drinks.
- Stick to a diet naturally high in folic acid (oranges, melons and dark green vegetables).
- Buy well-fitting support or nursing bras.
- Talk to your health care provider about labor and delivery classes.
- Walk and do Kegel and pelvic rock exercises every day.
- Take time to rest every day; especially if you work.
- Lying on your side may be more comfortable.
- Discuss your concerns about parenting with your family, friends or health care provider.
- Share your good and bad feelings about having a baby with family, friends and health care provider.
- Lie down and get your feet up at least 30 minutes a day.
- Choose comfortable shoes and clothes to fit your changing size.
- Fit seat belts low over your hips.

Notes:

Sixth Month

Weeks 23–26

Your Baby

- Your baby is big enough to be felt when your abdomen is examined.
- The skin is still wrinkled and red.
- The fingerprints are forming.
- The eyes are almost developed.
- The eyelids can open and close.
- Your baby can kick, cry and hiccup.
- Noises from the outside may cause the baby to move or become quiet.
- Your baby will be about 14 inches long and weigh 1 1/2 pounds by the end of this month.



Your Body

- You will continue to gain about 2 to 4 pounds a month.
- You may develop stretch marks on your stomach, hips and breasts.
- The uterus may be felt about the navel.
- Your appetite is good.
- You may get heartburn or gas, so eat slowly, relax, and avoid fried foods.
- Your sex drive may increase or decrease and change from week to week. Talk about your feelings with your partner.
- You may think about things that can go wrong with your baby. Most women do at some time during their pregnancy.
- You may begin to see patches of brown coloring on your cheeks, nose, and forehead, and a line that extends down from your navel. The brown patches and line will disappear or fade after your baby is born.



Your Responsibility

- Learn the signs and symptoms of preterm labor.
- Ask about a test for gestational diabetes.
- Drink 8-10 glasses of water, milk or fruit juices every day.
- Avoid smoking, drinks with caffeine (colas, teas, coffee) and junk food.
- DO NOT use cocaine, heroin, marijuana, or other street drugs.
- DO NOT drink beer, wine, wine coolers, whiskey, or any other alcoholic drinks.
- Eat healthy food including plenty of whole grains (breads, cereals, rice, and pasta), meats, fresh vegetables, fruit and milk.
- Discuss feelings about your changing body.
- Prepare for breast or bottle feeding.
- Get information on infant feeding and nipple care and check on the supplies you will need.
- Continue to take your prenatal vitamins everyday.

Notes:

Seventh Month

Weeks 27–31

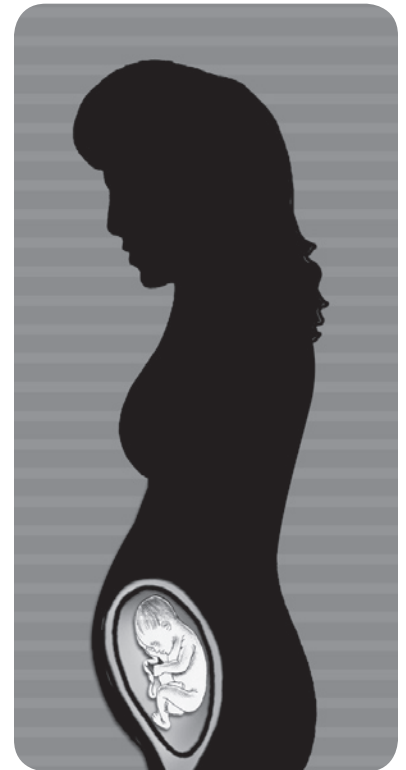
Your Baby

- Your baby is 15 inches long and will weigh about 2 1/2 to 3 pounds by the end of this month.
- A fine, soft hair called lanugo (la-NOO-goh) covers the baby.
- The brain and nervous system grow quickly.
- Your baby's heartbeat might be heard by another person placing an ear on your abdomen.
- Iron is being stored from now until birth.
- The fingerprints are formed.
- The testicles of boys start to move down into the scrotum.
- Sleeping and waking times are definite.
- Kicking and stretching movements are often noticed.
- Your baby is sucking his thumb.



Your Body

- You may gain weight faster because this begins the baby's greatest growth period.
- Your uterus is moving closer to your rib cage.
- You may notice kicking against your ribs.
- You can see your abdomen move as your baby moves.
- You may feel awkward and tire more easily.
- You may feel light-headed when you get up.
- Your feet, hands and ankles may swell if it's hot or you've been standing a lot.
- Your breasts may leak enough to require padding in your bra.
- You may notice a loosening in the pelvic bones when you walk.



Your Responsibility

- Get your prenatal checkup this month.
- Discuss how close up to delivery you want to work.
- Start prenatal classes right away if you have put it off.
- Tour the labor and delivery section of the hospital you will use.
- Think about things you will need the first six weeks, like nutritious, easy to prepare foods, paper plates, disposable diapers, and/or diaper service.
- Eat three balanced meals daily with healthy snacks in between.
- Drink 8-10 glasses of water, milk, and fruit juices every day.
- Avoid smoking, drinks with caffeine (colas, teas, coffee) and junk food.
- DO NOT use cocaine, heroin, marijuana, or other street drugs.
- DO NOT drink beer, wine, wine coolers, whiskey, or any other alcoholic drinks.
- Stick to a diet naturally high in folic acid (oranges, melons and dark green vegetables).
- Plan what you will do when you go into labor.
- How are you going to get to the hospital?
- Who will watch your children?
- Practice daily relaxation and breathing exercises.
- Talk about feelings and responsibility with your partner.
- Plan special times with your partner.
- Take extra time to do things for you.

Your Tests

_____ Blood Pressure
_____ Weight
_____ Urine
_____ Height of fundus
_____ Fetal heart tones
_____ Abdomen felt for baby's position and size
_____ Blood Tests (as needed)

Notes:

Eighth Month

Weeks 32–35

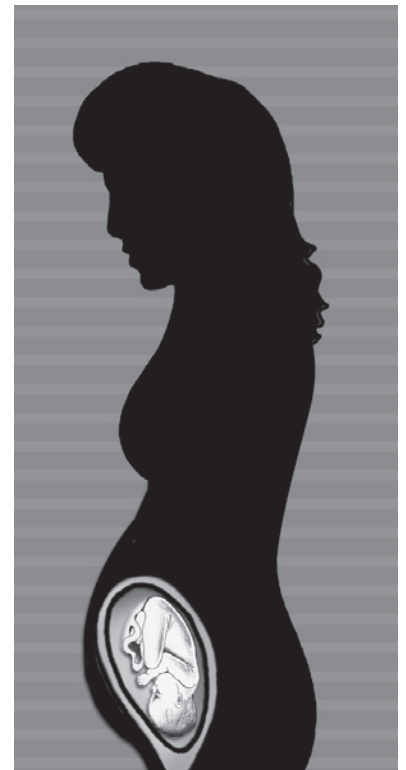
Your Baby

- Your baby weighs about 5 1/2 pounds and is about 18 inches long.
- Your baby's eyes are open.
- The skin is smooth because fat begins to fill out the wrinkles.
- The downy hair gradually disappears.
- Your baby is active with noticeable patterns of sleep and wakefulness.
- He/she may settle into the position for birth.
- The baby's body is now mature enough to survive if it is born early.
- Your baby gains about 2 pounds this month.



Your Body

- You may find this month is the most uncomfortable.
- You may have trouble sitting or lying down for a long period of time.
- You may have a problem breathing when the baby pushes against your lungs.
- Your uterus is now near your rib cage.
- You can feel parts of the baby through your abdominal wall.
- You may need to urinate more often (as the baby's head pushes on your bladder). Good fluid intake is important to help prevent urinary tract infections.
- Your vaginal secretions will increase.
- You may have hemorrhoids (HEM-or-roidz) or be constipated. Increase your fluids and your fruits, juices and vegetables.
- You may have heartburn.
- You may sweat more easily.
- You may begin to tire easily.



Your Responsibility

- Continue your prenatal checkups.
- Eat three balanced meals a day or six small meals.
- Avoid smoking, drinks with caffeine (colas, teas, coffee) and junk food.
- DO NOT use cocaine, marijuana, or other street drugs.
- DO NOT drink beer, wine, wine coolers, whiskey, or any other alcoholic drinks.
- Drink 8-10 glasses of water each day.
- Stick to a diet naturally high in folic acid (oranges, melons and dark green vegetables).
- Keep up your walking and stretching exercises.
- Practice the exercises from your labor and delivery class.
- You should pack your suitcase. Include clothes and other items to use at the hospital and clothes for you and your baby to wear home.

Your Tests

_____ Blood Pressure
_____ Weight
_____ Urine
_____ Height of fundus
_____ Fetal heart tones
_____ Abdomen felt for baby's position and size
_____ Blood Tests (as needed)

Notes:

Ninth Month

Weeks 36–40

Your Baby

- Your baby grows about 2 1/2 inches and gains 2 pounds.
- Your baby weighs 6 to 7 1/2 pounds and is about 20 inches long.
- The eye color is dark grey, which may change after birth.
- The fingernails become complete and may grow long.
- The baby settles into a head down position.
- The baby will still have periods of sleep and activity.
- About one quart of amniotic fluid surrounds your baby.



Your Body

- You are tired of being pregnant and ready for delivery.
- Your abdomen is getting bigger and may look lopsided when the baby moves.
- Your hands and feet may swell. Put your feet up occasionally.
- You may feel pressure low in the pelvis as the baby settles into position for birth.
- Your sleep may be disturbed.
- You may need to urinate more often.
- You may need to move more often.
- You tire easily and often feel drowsy.



Your Responsibility

- Get a prenatal checkup each week until the baby arrives.
- Ask about a test for Group B Strep.
- Eat three balanced meals a day or six small meals.
- Small meals will help you if you have an upset stomach.
- Continue to exercise and practice for labor and delivery.
- You should limit out-of-area travel.
- Plan for a birth control method.
- Cover your mattress and your chair with plastic in case your bag of water breaks. (A shower curtain liner works well and is inexpensive.)
- List phone numbers of people to call when labor begins.
- Treat yourself and your partner to something special.
- Pay attention to the baby's movement.
- The baby should move about 10 times in two hours or less.
- Be sure you have an approved car seat that has never been involved in an accident.

Notes:

Determining Your Due Date

The average time from conception to full term is 266 days. The pregnancy period is about 40 weeks. Only 5 percent of babies arrive on their due date. Most babies arrive about two weeks before or two weeks after their due date. The due date is counted as 280 days from the first day of your last period.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Find the first day of your last period on the calendar.
2. Move ahead nine months.
3. Find the same date.
4. Add seven days.
5. This will be your baby's due date.

EXAMPLE:

1. Suppose your last period began June 10.
2. Move ahead nine months to March.
3. Find March 10.
4. Add seven days.
5. The due date would be March 17.

PREGNANCY CALENDAR

Counting ahead nine months and adding seven days.

FIRST DAY OF
LAST PERIOD

JUNE						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

1

JULY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

2

AUGUST						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

3

SEPTEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
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26	27	28	29	30		

4

OCTOBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
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25	26	27	28	29	30	31

5

NOVEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

6

DECEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

7

JANUARY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

8

FEBRUARY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

9

MARCH						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

ESTIMATED
DUE DATE

Predicting your due date is just a good guess. Your menstrual cycle will affect the length of your pregnancy. The baby may be early if you have periods every 21 days. Your baby may be later if your periods are usually more than 28 days. Women with regular periods usually have their babies close to the due date. Your age, race, size, and number of children do not make a difference.

Sometimes doctors use other ways to set the due date. They do this when the woman has used birth control pills, has irregular periods or has not kept track of her periods. They may do some of the following:

- Listen to the baby's heartbeat.
- Check the size of the uterus.
- Check for the baby's movement. (Mark on your calendar the first time you feel the baby move. Report it at your next visit.)
- Feel the baby through the abdomen.
- Measure the uterine contractions and the abdominal size.
- Do an ultrasound. (This is a machine that uses ultrasonic waves to produce a "picture" of the baby).

The due date is harder to set near the end of pregnancy. This is one reason why early prenatal care is important.

Exercise During Pregnancy

Exercise is important for a healthy pregnancy. Exercise can help you look and feel better. Talk with your health care provider about what exercises are safe for you. Pregnancy is not a time for new activities. Swimming, walking and relaxation exercises are safe exercises for pregnant women.

When you exercise:

- Wear comfortable, loose clothes.
- Drink plenty of water during exercise.
- Eat a snack an hour before.
- Don't become overheated.
- Warm up.
- Never exercise to the point of pain, exhaustion or breathlessness.
- Don't lie on your back.
- Cool down after.

The following exercises will help prepare you for labor and delivery.

A. Kegel (Kay-gul) Exercise

Purpose:

This exercise will strengthen the muscles around the vagina. It will allow you to relax these muscles during delivery. It is the most important exercise.

How to do the Kegel Exercise:

1. *To get the feel of the muscles, stop and start your urine when you use the toilet.*
2. *Try to tighten these muscles from front to back.*
3. *Practice while you sit, stand, walk, drive or watch TV.*
4. *Do these exercises two to three times each day....morning, afternoon and evening.*
5. *Start with five kegels each session. Work up to 25 times each session.*

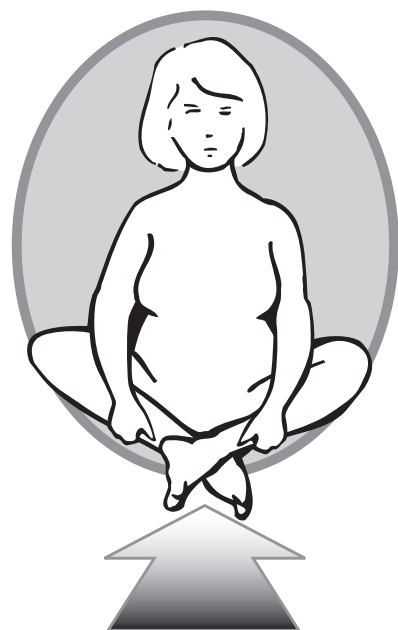
After your baby is born, keep doing kegels to restore your pelvic muscle tone.

B. Tailor Sit

Purpose:

This exercise will strengthen your inner thighs and increase your blood flow.

How to do the Tailor Sit:



1. Sit on the floor with your ankles crossed.
2. Pull your feet as close to your body as you can.
3. Relax and hold this position as long as you are comfortable.
4. Do this at least three times a day.

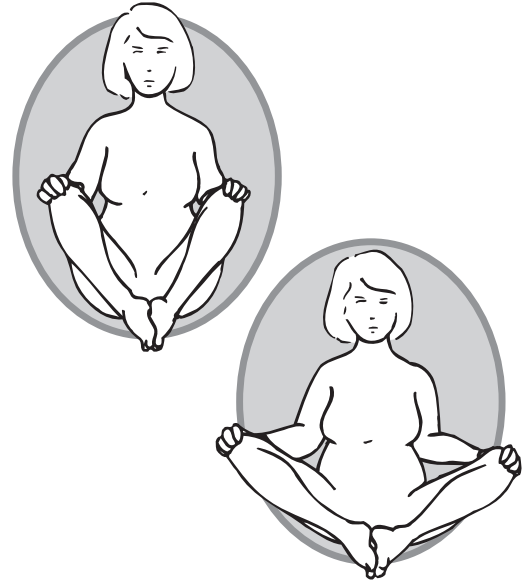
C. Knee Press

Purpose:

This will strengthen your inner thighs. It will stretch your lower back. It will increase your blood flow.

How to do the Knee Press:

1. Sit on the floor.
2. Pull your feet together with soles touching.
3. Bring your feet as near to your body as you can without feeling uncomfortable.
4. Keep your back straight and place your hands on your knees.
5. Press your knees slowly and gently to the floor with your hand.
6. Hold your knees to the floor and count to three.
7. Repeat 10 times, twice each day.



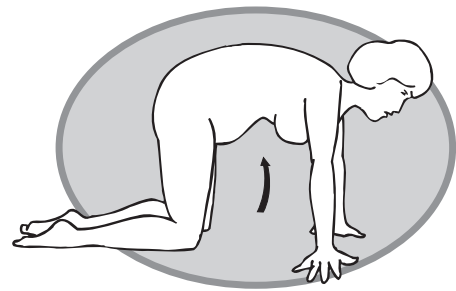
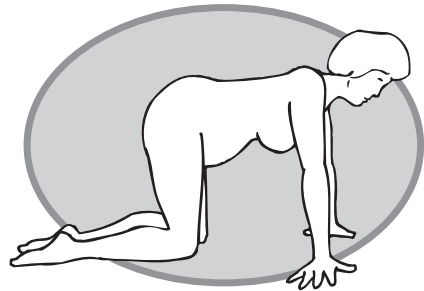
D. The Pelvic Rock

Purpose:

This will strengthen your tummy muscles. It will relieve backaches and increase your blood flow.

How to do the Pelvic Rock:

1. Get down on your hands and knees with your arms straight.
2. Relax your back.
3. Keep your head in a straight line with your pelvis.
4. Hump your back, tighten your tummy muscles and your buttock muscles.
5. Drop your head all the way down and pull your pelvis toward your chin.
6. Relax your back and raise your head.
7. Do this slowly and evenly 10 times each day.



Warning Signs

Stop exercising and call your primary care provider if you have any of the following problems:

- Pain
- Vaginal bleeding or leaking of fluid
- Dizziness or faintness
- Abdominal pain or cramping
- Headaches or blurred vision
- Chest pain
- Rapid heartbeat
- Increased shortness of breath

Talk to your primary care provider if you are currently exercising regularly or if you plan to start a new exercise program. Your provider will tell you what you can do while you are pregnant.

Prenatal Care

You should go to the doctor as soon as you think you are pregnant. Early signs of pregnancy include missed periods, morning sickness, sore breasts, sleepiness, and frequent urination.

Medical History

Your doctor or health care provider will ask questions about your health, any medicines you take, your family's health, and your lifestyle, in order to identify possible risks to your pregnancy.

Blood Pressure

A cuff will be wrapped around your arm and filled with air to check how well your heart is working. Your blood pressure may go up during pregnancy, so your doctor or health care provider will watch it closely to help your baby be born as healthy as possible.

Weight and Height

The nurse will measure how tall you are and how much you weigh now so your weight gain can be recorded throughout the pregnancy.

Blood Test

You will have blood drawn from your arm to check your blood type and to look for diseases such as anemia, sickle cell disease, hepatitis, syphilis and HIV. If any disease is present, you have to be treated right away.

Urine

You will be asked to pee into a small cup. The urine will be tested for sugar (diabetes), protein, and infections, which need to be found early to keep you and your baby healthy.

Physical Exam

Your doctor or provider will check your heart, lungs and other organs to find out if you have any conditions that need to be treated. You will also learn how to check your breasts for lumps.

Pelvic Exam

You will lie on a table with your feet in supports so your doctor or health care provider can feel the size and shape of your uterus. This is done to see how the baby is developing to let you know when your baby is due. You may also get a Pap smear to detect other infections.

Abdominal Exam

The size of your uterus will be measured at each visit. The baby's position and size will be checked. You can hear the heart beat just after the fourth month.

Ultrasound

An ultrasound uses sound waves to create pictures of the baby called sonograms. Most moms have the test done at least once during the pregnancy. The test is safe for you and your baby. The ultrasound may show: the age of your baby, whether the baby is growing and developing normally, whether or not you are carrying twins, if it is a boy or a girl, and how the placenta is growing.

Questions and Answers

Your health care provider might not talk about everything you want to know. Write down your questions so you won't forget them, and take your list with you to your prenatal visits.

Tips for dads during the pregnancy

- Go with mom to prenatal visits. You will get a lot of good information about how to take care of her, you will get to hear the baby's heartbeat, and see the baby during the ultrasound.
- Get a book that explains the month-to-month growth of a baby. Learn how your baby is growing.
- Go to all of the prenatal classes that you can.
- Ask mom how she is feeling and what she is thinking. Be supportive and helpful. Pregnancy can be difficult for moms, both physically and emotionally.
- Help prepare the baby's room, pick out names, shop for all the things your baby will need (diapers, wipes, blankets, clothes, etc.).
- If you smoke, try to quit. Secondhand smoke is bad for both the mom and the growing baby.
- Plan how you will help during labor and delivery. Know how to get to the hospital and what to take with you.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions. Write your questions down and ask the health care provider for answers.

Sex During Pregnancy

Sex starts a pregnancy, but pregnancy does not mean the end of sex. Intercourse can be enjoyed throughout pregnancy, unless your health care provider advises against it. Making love during pregnancy is a special experience and includes many ways of sharing pleasure and feeling close to our partners with and without intercourse. Expectant couples often have questions about sex. Talking with each other is the key to a good sexual relationship; it is important to share your feelings. Ask your health care provider about your questions.

Here are answers to some usual questions, but since each pregnancy is unique, there is no one right answer for all.

Will sex harm my unborn baby?

Your baby is protected by a membrane (bag of water) and fluid. Your stomach wall and the bones of your pelvis also protect it. It is almost impossible to harm your baby by having intercourse.

Can I have intercourse anytime?

Sex during pregnancy is safe except in a few cases. It is best to follow your health care provider's advice.

Warnings about sex during pregnancy

If any of these things happen, stop any intercourse and get medical advice:

- Pain in the vagina or stomach
- Bleeding, itching or discharge from the vagina
- "Bag of water" breaks and fluid comes out of the vagina
- You are worried or think a miscarriage might happen

Remember, intercourse is not the only means of sharing sexual pleasure and closeness.

Some sex practices are risky to your health.

1. Protect your baby and yourself from AIDS. Always have safe sex (using a condom) unless you are absolutely sure that neither you nor your partner is infected.
 2. Some sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) can be passed to your baby. If you have, or think you have an STD, call your health care provider right away.
 3. Taking drugs or alcohol to increase sexual feelings can cause serious damage to the unborn baby.
 4. Make sure that bacteria from the rectum does not enter the vagina. This can cause infection. Bacteria from the rectum can pass to the vagina by anal intercourse or by improper wiping.
-

Will desire for sex decrease during pregnancy?

Your desire for sex may increase or decrease. It is normal for feelings to vary a great deal due to body changes in pregnancy. Both partners need time to adjust to these changes. The woman can feel the changes going on inside and outside. The man can only guess how she feels.

Fathers often have shifts in their emotions, too. Sex and pregnancy do not seem to go together for some men, and they may feel guilty about their sexual desires or lack of desire. A woman's desire for sex may increase due to not having to worry about birth control. Also, more blood flowing to the pelvis in pregnancy enhances sexual feelings. Many pregnant women also feel the need for more affection. They need to know they still look nice and are loved.

Toward the end of her pregnancy, however, a woman may not feel very sexy. Her mind is on getting ready for the baby. The most important thing is to talk about your feelings with your partner. Sharing your feelings and concerns will help you meet each other's needs.

Is it harmful to have an orgasm during pregnancy?

No, it is not harmful to have an orgasm. Having an orgasm will not hurt the baby. But, some pregnant women have sexual tension and pelvic discomfort after sex. Orgasm sometimes fails to relieve this tension and the body takes longer to relax.

What if the pressure during intercourse is uncomfortable?

If the man's weight causes uncomfortable pressure, change positions. One position that avoids belly to belly contact and can be used even in the later stages of pregnancy is the side-by-side with the man behind so you fit like a "spoon." Late in pregnancy, positions where the penis does not go in as deep may be tried. The woman-on-top position is good because it gives the woman more control. Other ways of showing love and affection also may be explored and enjoyed during these special months to help you and your partner grow closer together as you await the birth of your baby.

How soon after delivery can intercourse start again?

Your body has many changes to go through after birth that affect your sex life. Your hormones must go back to normal levels. The uterus and vagina must return to their normal size. You may begin sexual intercourse when bleeding and discharge stop, and when tears or cuts in the vagina heal. This will take from two to six weeks, depending on how fast your body heals. It is best to follow your health care provider advice.

Birth Control after Delivery

You need a good method of birth control after having your baby. You can get pregnant in the first few weeks after giving birth, even if you are breastfeeding. Vaginal foam for you and condoms for your partner are good methods to use. Your health care provider may write a prescription for a birth control method you can start a few days after the baby is born. Your postpartum checkup will be four to six weeks after you give birth. At that time you can choose a method of birth control.

It is important to talk about sex after childbirth. Go slowly and talk with each other about what feels comfortable. Your tissues may still be tender. They will not be as moist as before, and a water-soluble vaginal jelly may help. If you had stitches, you may need to gently stretch that area. Continue to practice Kegal exercises. Intercourse may be a little painful at first. Your body needs time to adjust and get back to normal. Be patient. Take some time. You can enjoy sex after childbirth. If you have doubts or questions about when to begin intercourse, check with your health care provider.

Normal Complaints and Problems of Pregnancy

Symptoms

What to Do

Nausea

Eat dry crackers, toast or cereal before getting up or when feeling sick.
Eat five or six small meals a day. Drink lots of water between meals, but not during meals.
Avoid strong food smells. Avoid greasy or spicy foods.

Tender Breasts

Wear a good supportive bra. It may help to wear it to bed.

Leaking Breasts

Wear nursing pads or tissues in your bra.

Frequent Urination

Limit fluids before bedtime. Limit fluids when a bathroom is not nearby.
(Drink necessary fluids at other times.)

Fatigue

Fatigue is common early and late in pregnancy. Exercising each day may help you have more energy. Lie down at least once a day.

Constipation

Eat raw fruits, vegetables, prunes and whole grain or bran cereals.
Exercise helps. Walking is very good. Drink at least two quarts of fluid each day.
A cup of hot water three times a day helps.

Hemorrhoids

Try to keep bowel movements regular. Take short rests with hips lifted on a pillow. Sit on firm chairs or sit tailor style on the floor.
Practice Kegal exercises.

Low Backache

Rest often. Keep good posture. Move around rather than standing in one place too long.
Use a footstool for your feet. Keep your knees higher than your hips. Wear low-heeled shoes.

Vaginal Discharge

(itching/discharge/odor) Bathe the outer vaginal area often. Use soap without perfume.
Do not use vaginal sprays, powders or feminine hygiene products. Do not use colored or perfumed toilet paper. Wear cotton panties. Avoid panty hose, girdles and tight pants. If these tips do not help, talk to your health care provider.

Heartburn

Stay away from greasy and spicy foods. Eat smaller meals but eat more often. Don't lie down for at least 30 minutes after eating.

Dizziness

Change your position slowly.
Get up slowly when you have been lying down.
Eat regular meals. Do not stay in the sun too long or get too hot.
Report ANY dizziness to your health care provider.

Varicose Veins	Avoid stockings or girdles with elastic bands. You may use support hose. Put them on while lying down. Take short rests with legs raised. Raise your legs when you sit down.
Shooting Pains Down Legs	Change positions If you are sitting – stand up. If you are standing – sit down.
Lower Leg Cramps	Elevate legs often during the day. Point toes upward and press down on kneecaps. Use a heating pad or hot water bottle for relief.
Increased Secretions	(mucus-nose/throat/mouth) Do not use over-the-counter medicine. Check with your health care provider.
Trouble Sleeping	Do not eat just before going to bed. Drinking milk may help. Try a warm bath before you go to bed. Practice exercises that help you relax. Listen to relaxing music.
Feel Faint when Lying on Back	Lie on your left side.
Feet and Hands Swell	Lie on your left side for 30 minutes. Do this three or four times a day. Exercise often. Drink more fluids. Eat three servings of protein each day. If you wake up in the morning with swelling, tell your health care provider.
Bleeding Gums	Use a soft toothbrush and brush gently. Drink more orange juice and eat more foods high in Vitamin C. Floss regularly. See your dentist if problems continue.
False Labor	Change your position and your activity. Drink a glass of water. If it is true labor, it will not stop. True labor contractions will become more regular and closer together. If contractions continue, call your health care provider immediately.

Tell your doctor or clinic what problems/complaints you have been having and what you have done to provide relief.

If at any time these methods don't work, call your health care provider.

Weight Gain During Pregnancy

The right weight gain for you

Pregnancy is a time to eat right and gain the right amount of weight. The amount of weight you should gain depends on how much you weighed when you became pregnant. You need to gain more weight if you were underweight and less if you were overweight.

Weight Gain Goal

Your weight before:	You should gain:
Underweight	28-40 pounds
Healthy weight	25-35 pounds
Overweight	15-25 pounds
Very overweight	15 pounds or less
Twins	35-45 pounds

How fast should you gain weight?

In early pregnancy, you will gain weight to provide food for your growing baby. In later pregnancy, most weight gain will be from your baby's own growth (that's why your baby should not be born too early).

Steady weight gain during pregnancy is best. Keep track of your weight to make sure you are gaining the right amount of weight each week.

Rate of Weight Gain

Prepregnancy weight	First to Third month	Fourth to Ninth month
Underweight	3 to 5 pounds	Slightly more than 1 pound per week
Healthy weight	2 to 4 pounds	About 1 pound per week
Overweight	1 to 2 pounds	About 2/3 pound per week

If your weight goes up or down suddenly, be sure to check with your doctor.

If you gain too little, your baby may be born small. If you gain too much, it may be hard for you to get back to a healthy weight and stay there after your baby is born.

Use the chart below to track your weight gain week-by-week.

To get “Weight Gained”, subtract “Weight Before Pregnant” from “Current Weight”.

Weight Before Pregnant _____

Weeks Pregnant	Current Weight	Weight Gained
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
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What You Need for Baby's First Weeks

The list below shows basic things you need to care for your baby. You can add extra items if your budget allows.

CLOTHING: Adjust the number needed depending on your laundry facilities.
Avoid buying newborn sizes which your baby may quickly outgrow.

Disposable diapers/cotton diapers and pins	1-2 packages <i>(then purchase as needed)</i>
Shirts	4-6
Sleepers, kimonos, nightgowns	4-6

BEDDING:

Receiving blankets	4-5
Waterproof pads	3-4 <i>(1-2 small ones to use as lap pads)</i>
Sheets	3-4
Blankets	2-3

BATHING:

Towels	2-3
Washcloths	4-6
Mild soap	1

*Apply for WIC Services to help you
and your baby with food items.*

BREASTFEEDING:

Handkerchiefs or clean cloths	5-6
Nursing pads	5-6
Support/nursing bra	2-3
Breast Pump	

BOTTLE FEEDING:

Bottles and caps	8-10 (4 and 8 oz size)
Nipples	10-12
Bottle and nipple brush	1
Small pan for warming bottles	1
Quart measuring cup	1
Formula (In ready-to-feed, powdered or liquid concentrate form)	1 week supply (then purchase as needed)
Boiled sterile water for mixing with powdered or liquid	1 gallon
Can opener	1
Measuring spoons	1 set

EQUIPMENT:

Car Seat (make sure the model is safe for your car)	
Crib (if used, make sure the crib is sturdy and has no lead paint)	
Diaper pail with cover	
Thermometer to be used under the arm	
Rubbing alcohol/cotton balls for cord care	
Diaper bag for supplies	
Mobles in bright colors for infant stimulation	
Stroller	

*Buy what you need ahead of time.
This will help you to be ready to
care for your baby. Buy other items
as you need them. Look for special
sales in stores on baby items or go to
garage sales. Ask your friends and
family to help you.*

How Will I Know if I am in Labor?

When should I go to the hospital?

This is a hard question to answer. It will vary depending on many things. For example:

- How far do you live from the hospital?
- Have you had any children before?
- If you have had children before, did you have a fast labor?

If you are not sure about what may be happening to you, call your health care provider. You should always call right away if you have any of these signs:

- Baby is moving less or is not moving at all
- Severe headache
- Fever
- Blurred vision
- Sudden gush of fluid from your vagina (birth canal)
- Flow of blood from your vagina
- Swollen hands
- Sharp pain in your back, stomach, or both
- Bloody, bad-smelling, brownish or greenish fluid from your vagina

How can I tell I am going into labor?

- Signs of labor can be different for each woman. They may start a few weeks, a few days, or even a few hours before you are ready to give birth.
- Some women have clear signs of labor. Their labor pains (contractions) are hard and regular.
- Some women have labor pains (contractions) that are not as hard. Their contractions may start and stop over a period of time.
- Contractions are not the only sign that labor is about to begin. You may have some or all of the following changes:

“Lightening” or “Dropping”

- If this is your first baby, your baby may settle or “drop” into your pelvis about two weeks before labor begins.
- If this is not your first baby, your baby may wait until you go into labor to “drop”.
- After the baby “drops,” you have more room to breathe. You may also have less heartburn since there is less pressure against your stomach.
- You may have more pressure on your bladder after the baby “drops” and need to go to the bathroom more often.

Amniotic membranes or “Bag of Water” Breaks

- Your amniotic membranes may break before labor starts.
- For most women, the amniotic membranes usually break late in labor.
- When your amniotic membranes break, you may feel a “gush” or a “trickle.”
- If you think your “bag of water” has broken, call your health care provider’s office immediately.

Energy

- Some women feel a sudden “burst of energy” just before labor starts. If this happens to you, please rest so you will have energy for labor.
-

Weight Loss

- Some women lose about 1-3 pounds the day before labor starts.

Upset Stomach

- Some women have indigestion, loose stools (mild diarrhea), an upset stomach, or vomit just before they go into labor. Some women say they just “felt different” the day they went into labor.

Mucous Plug

- You may see “pink mucus” coming from your vagina over a period of hours or even days. This is your mucous plug.
- Dark red, bright red, or heavy bleeding from your vagina is a danger sign. Get to the hospital right away. You may need to go by ambulance. Call 911 if you need to go by ambulance.

False Labor**Contractions or “pains”:**

- Are not getting closer together,
- Are usually irregular and short,
- Are not getting stronger or “harder,”
- Usually feel better with walking,
- Are usually felt in front or in the lower tummy area.

If you are not sure if you are in labor or not:

- Drink two glasses of water.
- Lie on your left side
- If contractions do not go away after one hour, call your health care provider.

True Labor**Contractions or “pains”:**

- Are not regular at first, but become regular and closer together;
- Do not go away if you lie down;
- Are getting stronger or “harder;”
- Get stronger or “harder” if walking;
- Are felt low in the front, back, or both;
- Feel like bad menstrual or period cramps.

Timing Contractions**To time contractions:**

- Write the time each contraction starts on a piece of paper.
- See how far apart your contractions are by counting the minutes between the beginning of one contraction to the beginning of the next contraction.
- Call your health care provider when you have 10 contractions in a row that are five minutes or less apart.
- This will be about 10-12 contractions in one hour.

*Don't be afraid to call if you have questions or concerns.
Your health care provider wants to help you have
a safe delivery and a healthy baby.*

Adapted from “How will I know if I am in labor?” from Region 3.

Cesarean Birth

Why do you need to know about Cesarean (si-ZAIR-ee-un) birth?

Every woman should know about Cesarean birth. Cesarean births are sometimes called C-sections. A woman may have a Cesarean when there is a problem in labor or when the baby does not turn. A Cesarean delivery is when a cut is made in the abdomen (tummy) and the uterus. Then the baby is delivered through it. The mother has been given an anesthetic to keep from feeling the pain. Sometimes there is a risk in having a vaginal birth, so a Cesarean birth would be safer. It protects the baby and the mother. About one of every seven births is Cesarean. It is not a sign of failure if you do not have a vaginal birth. It is more important that your baby be born healthy.

Why do some women need a Cesarean birth?

Most reasons for the first Cesarean are:

- The baby's head is too large for the mother's pelvis.
- The baby's heartbeat shows the baby is not getting enough oxygen.
- The baby's heartbeat may show other problems.
- The baby is in an awkward position (the buttocks or arms are coming first).
- There is more than one baby.
- The placenta is blocking the cervix (the uterus opening).
- The placenta comes loose from the uterus before the baby is born.
- The baby is more than two weeks past due and seems to have problems.
- The "bag of water" breaks and labor does not start.
- The mother has a sexually transmitted disease (STD).
- The mother has diabetes.
- The mother has pre-eclampsia (increased blood pressure that may make the kidneys work poorly).
- The mother has severe vaginal bleeding late in pregnancy. Report ANY dizziness to your health care provider.

What questions should I ask?

During your prenatal visits, ask your health care provider for the choices you have in case you need a C-section. Knowing ahead of time can help you know what to expect. Discuss the different methods with your doctor. Then you will be ready, if you need to have a Cesarean.

What happens in a cesarean birth?

A C-section delivery takes 45 to 90 minutes.

Here is what usually happens:

- Your abdomen (tummy) is washed.
 - Your blood is taken and typed in case there is a need to give you blood later.
 - A tube is put in your bladder to drain urine into a bag. Your doctor can then keep the bladder away from the cut.
 - An intravenous (IV) solution is inserted in your arm. This gives you nourishment or medication.
-

- You may get an antacid to calm your stomach.
- Your tummy is scrubbed again.
- You will be given an anesthetic. (an-is-THET-ic)
- There are two kinds of anesthetics:
A general anesthetic puts you to sleep.
A local anesthetic numbs some areas but you are awake.
- Your doctor will decide which anesthetic to give.
- The cut is made and the baby is delivered.
- Your uterus and tummy are sewn back together. This step takes most of the time.

What is the most common type of C-section?

The TRANSVERSE (trans-VURCE) cut is a horizontal cut. It is made across the bottom of the uterus. This is the quickest method. It is also called the bikini cut.

What happens afterwards?

If you have had a Cesarean delivery, you can sometimes nurse your baby right away. Breastfeeding is more successful if the baby sucks soon after birth. “Getting started” might be a bit slower. The father should be allowed to hold and cuddle the baby, too.

This is a good time for parents and baby to get close to each other. You will be taken to the recovery room after delivery. You will stay there until the anesthetic wears off. This may take two to five hours. Some hospitals allow the father and the baby to stay with you. Your baby may be taken to the special care nursery to be watched. You will be moved to an area for new mothers after recovery. You may feel less social than the other mothers. You are in the hospital around three days for a Cesarean birth. Some stitches may be removed about the fourth day at the health care provider’s office. Stitches that dissolve are sometimes used.

Feeling good again depends on your health at the time of the delivery. The reason for the C-section makes a difference, too.

How do you get back to normal?

You can prevent problems if you exercise while still in bed. The exercises reduce gas pains and speed recovery. They take some effort, but are worth it. Ask your health care provider about them. Rest is very important for your recovery.

You will need help to care for your baby. You should have someone close to you come stay with you. They should plan to be with you for one to two weeks. You should not be alone until the baby is seven days old. Most of the time you will be resting in bed for those seven days. You will be able to get up to care for the baby and go to the bathroom. If you have a C-section without problems, you should be up daily, but you should rest often. Do not lift anything heavier than your baby. When you start feeling better, you should still take it easy. You will delay feeling good again if you do too much, too soon. The scar tissue will fade but it will not go away. The same place is used if you have another C-section. The old scar tissue is removed.

A Cesarean is just one of two ways to have a baby. You need longer to recover, but you and your baby are healthy. Hold and touch your baby as soon as you can. You, the father and the baby can enjoy your new lives together right away.

After Childbirth Day One

Your Baby

- Your newborn baby may look wrinkled and red.
- The baby's head may be a bit out of shape from birth and will be large compared to its body.
- The top of the baby's head will have soft spots in front and back.
- Your baby's eye color will be dark grey, but may change during the next few weeks.
- Your baby can focus on your face.
- The baby's breasts (both sexes) may be swollen for a few days.
- A baby boy may have a swollen scrotum (SCROH-tum).
- A baby girl may have a small bloody vaginal discharge.
- Your baby can respond to your voice, touch and grasp your finger, suck its fingers, and nurse.



Your Body

- You may feel tired and happy.
- You want to cuddle your new baby.
- You will want to eat, sleep and bathe.
- If you had an episiotomy (ee-PEEZ-ee-aw-toh-mee), your episiotomy incision will be sore.
- You may have trouble urinating because of swollen tissues.
- You will lose weight, as fluid is lost through frequent urination.
- You may sweat a lot to get rid of extra fluid.
- You will have a vaginal discharge (lochia) of blood from the uterus, which may be present for one to five weeks after birth.
- You will not have milk for several days. Colostrum (coh-LAW-strum) will nourish your baby until your breast milk comes in.
- Your abdomen will stay large until your muscles tighten.



Your Responsibility

- Hold, cuddle, touch and enjoy your baby.
- Talk with your partner about the birth experience.
- Repeat Kegel exercises after birth.
- Get up and walk as soon as you can.
- Rest when you are tired.
- Drink lots of liquids and eat when you are hungry.
- To increase milk flow, breastfeed soon after delivery and as needed.

NOTES:

Postpartum Depression

Baby Blues

What Are “Baby Blues?”

“Baby blues” are very common. Many new moms have a feeling of being let down after the emotionally-charged experience of birth. Baby blues may happen during the first few days after you have the baby. In some women, the feelings begin even before the baby is born. Symptoms of baby blues may include:

- sudden mood swings (ranging from feeling very happy to feeling very sad)
- feelings of loneliness
- restlessness
- irritability
- crying for no known reason
- anxiety

Symptoms of the blues usually go away on their own, sometimes as quickly as they came.

What Can Be Done?

- Talk with your partner and other loved ones about how you are feeling.
- Talk with your health care provider (doctor or nurse) about your feelings.
- Rest! Try to take a nap while your baby is sleeping.
- Ask for help with chores and nighttime feedings.
- Don't feel you have to do it all. Do as much as you can and leave the rest.
- Get dressed and leave the house for a short time each day.
- Try to spend time alone with your partner.
- Talk to other mothers.



Postpartum Depression

What Is It?

One in 10 mothers experience postpartum depression. It can occur while you are still pregnant, within days of the delivery, or appear gradually, sometimes up to a year or so later. Symptoms may include:

- sluggishness, fatigue, exhaustion
- sadness, depression, hopelessness
- appetite and sleep disturbances
- poor concentration, confusion
- memory loss
- over-concern for the baby
- uncontrollable crying, irritability
- lack of interest in the baby
- guilt, inadequacy
- fear of harming the baby
- fear of harming yourself
- exaggerated highs and/or lows
- lack of interest in sex

Symptoms may range from mild to severe. You may have “good” and “bad” days.

What Can Be Done?

Seek help from your health care provider (doctor or nurse) as soon as possible. Depending on how severe your depression is, your health care provider may put you on medication and refer you for counseling.

If you are breastfeeding, your health care provider can talk with you about which medications will be best for you while you breastfeed.

Postpartum Psychosis

What Is It?

Postpartum psychosis is a serious mental illness. It affects one in 1,000 new mothers. It occurs within the first three months after having a baby. Women who suffer from it may lose touch with reality. They may experience hallucinations, delusions, bizarre feelings and behavior, and be unable to sleep.

What Can Be Done?

Postpartum psychosis should be treated as a medical emergency. In many cases, women who have it are hospitalized.

Post-Delivery Period After Birth

You spent about nine months getting used to being pregnant. Now you are a non-pregnant woman again – *a mother!*

Being a mother is a big change in your life. This is true even when you want the baby and are ready for the responsibility. You may not have a “feeling of motherhood” right away. That feeling develops as you and your baby get to know each other. In fact, you may have mixed feelings about being a mother. These feelings may be good or bad.

Physical changes are part of adjusting. It can take from six weeks to three months for your body to return to normal. Right from the start, try not to do too much. There are a number of things you may worry about.

Here are a few tips to help you:

Share your concerns with someone. Find a person you can talk to about your feelings. Try to get together with some of the women from your classes after you have your babies. You are all going through the same stages together. Experienced mothers can also give good advice. Just knowing that you are not alone can be a big help.

Don't expect too much.

You may feel that you are not sure of how to take care of a newborn. All parents have to be “first timers” at infant care. So be prepared to be unprepared, and be patient. You will learn by doing.

Most first-time parents have never seen a newborn baby before. You should be ready for some surprises. For example, you may not know why your baby is crying and why your baby does not smile at you. Your friends who are parents can tell you how their baby looked. They also know how babies act the first few weeks.

Read about being a parent. There are several good books that you can get. Ask your health care provider for suggestions.

If people offer help—accept it.

This is a special time for you, the father, and the baby to be together. You will be able to care for the baby, but it is nice to have extra help at home. Someone else can do the household chores. Accept the fact that some things will not get done. And be careful. Avoid lifting objects heavier than the baby, and avoid climbing stairs the first few weeks.

Try to limit your visitors the first few weeks.

Many people will want to see your new baby. This can tire you out quickly. Try to space the time between visitors. If your visitors are sick, ask them to come back when they are feeling better. You do not have to be a super hostess. These visitors may want to help you. Let them.

If you do not feel well or have pain, call your health care provider.

It is normal to feel tired, but you should not feel sick. If you have any of these problems, call your health care provider at once.

- Very heavy or sudden increases in bleeding from your vagina (this would be more than a menstrual period. Soaking more than two sanitary napkins in a half-hour is heavy.)
 - A discharge from your vagina with a strong, unpleasant smell
 - An oral temperature of 101 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
 - Red and/or painful breasts
-

- Loss of appetite for a long period of time
- Pain, redness, tenderness and/or swelling of your legs
- Pain in your lower stomach or your back

Advice will come from everyone.

Listen to the well meaning “advice givers” and then follow what seems sensible to you. Do what fits into your lifestyle and your ideas about parenting.

Don't ignore signs of tiredness.

Tune into the signs your body gives you about being tired. Many women are surprised by how tired they feel during the first few months. Adjust your schedule to fit your baby's. Try taking a nap or rest when the baby does.

Weight loss after birth is something most women welcome.

It is normal to lose 10 to 15 pounds right after birth. This will depend on how much of the weight is water. You will have more weight to lose, but diet later. Your body needs a well-balanced diet to help you keep up your energy level and good health. You have about seven pounds of fat stored in your body. This gives you an energy reserve for about the first three months. These extra pounds will gradually come off. You need to eat properly and get adequate exercise. If you are breastfeeding, it is important for you to eat right. Your diet provides the nutrients your baby needs. Your body will burn up to 1,000 calories a day just making milk, so you need to eat an extra 500 calories a day (such as a turkey and cheese sandwich and a glass of milk). You also need to drink more fluids. This helps your body make milk.

Ask your health care provider when you should start your post delivery exercises.

Exercise is a must to get your body's tone and flexibility back. Exercise on a regular basis. Try to do your prenatal exercises. The ones to strengthen your stomach and relax are good.

Birth control is needed.

Breastfeeding or not having your period will not protect you from getting pregnant. If you are breastfeeding, you should not use the combined birth control pill. Your partner can use condoms, or you can use birth control foam or jelly. Ask your health care provider about other choices at your post delivery checkup.

“Baby blues” is not a joke.

It is normal to feel blue and a little let down after the excitement of pregnancy and delivery. “Baby blues” usually lasts no longer than a week or two. Your hormones are changing after the birth of your baby. The hormone changes are a major reason why you feel blue. Your changing role with your partner and the baby's constant needs all can add to the “baby blues.” You might resent the ways the baby has changed your life. This could make you feel angry and guilty. It is a normal feeling that all parents have. Talk to your health care provider if feeling “blue” concerns you.

Two is company, three's a crowd.

Now there is a new person in your lives. The baby will change the way both of you feel about yourselves, and it may change how you relate to each other. Making the change from “couple” to “family” can cause some tensions. A man often feels that the baby gets all the attention and may feel somewhat left out. Talking with each other can prevent some problems and solve others. It is sometimes hard for other children to accept the new baby. They may think the baby is taking away all their mother's attention. Set aside a special time for the other children.

Finally, keep your sense of humor.

There will be good days and bad days. Do whatever you can to enjoy your new baby.

Postpartum Check-Up

Your first checkup will be scheduled about four to six weeks after delivery. Your postpartum check up may include the following:

Blood Pressure:	Your blood pressure will be checked to see if it is normal.
Anemia:	Your blood may be checked to make sure you don't have "low blood" (anemia).
Breast Examination:	Your breasts will be checked for lumps and nipple problems. Ask how to check your own breasts. If you are breastfeeding, your breasts may feel firm and full.
Vagina and Cervix:	You will be checked for healing, muscle tone and abnormal bleeding. A Pap smear may be done.
Uterus:	The size and shape of your uterus will be checked. Your uterus should be much smaller now. It will never be as small as before you were pregnant.
Abdominal Exam:	Your muscle tone will be checked. If you had a C-section, your incision will also be checked for healing.
Menstrual Cycle:	<p>Most women ovulate (release an egg) before they have their first period. You can get pregnant the first time you ovulate. You can also get pregnant before you have a period. The first period, four to 10 weeks after delivery, may be heavy. If you are nursing, your first period may be delayed for several weeks or months.</p> <p>Birth control is needed before your first period. You will choose a method of birth control at this visit, if you haven't already done so.</p>
Psychosocial Changes:	<p>Your feelings and your partner's feelings may change. Talk to each other about the changes you are experiencing since your pregnancy.</p> <p>Having a new baby is stressful; find time for yourself. You deserve a break!</p>

Notes

You may have questions about exercise, work, your health, your baby's health or other concerns. This is a good time to ask your doctor for answers and advice. Write your questions down so you won't forget them.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Facts for Fathers

You are about to go through one of life's greatest joys – the birth of your child. This is a time of change for both you and your partner. Here are some ideas to help you.

Your partner's pregnancy

The pregnancy will have more meaning for both of you if you stay involved during the entire pregnancy.

Your partner should get good prenatal care.

She should see a health care provider on a regular basis. Visits to her health care provider can help make sure the pregnancy is going as it should. Stay informed about her pregnancy. If possible, go to the prenatal visits with her.

Help her eat right and stay in shape.

She will need to follow a balanced food plan. This may mean changing some of your own eating habits. Some exercise is good for both mother and baby. Encourage her to exercise. Try walking with her when you can.

Use this time to relax and talk about things together. It's important that you and your partner stay away from alcohol, cigarettes and drugs while she's pregnant.

Your changing role

As the pregnancy progresses, you will need to take on more than your normal share of the household duties. Make sure she gets a chance each day to put her feet up and relax. Decide now who will do what after the baby comes. Don't forget you are both in this together. Plan to share both the work and the fun.

Your relationship

There will be changes between you and your partner. For instance, you both may have mood swings. You may feel sad, worried or nervous for no real reason. Try to listen and help each other. Take the time to talk things over. Your sex life may also change.

In a normal pregnancy, it is safe to have intercourse through the end of the eighth month. During the ninth month, and for about six weeks after the baby comes, find other ways to be close besides intercourse. Your health care provider can give you advice in this area.

Sources of help

If you have questions during the pregnancy or after your baby arrives, try the following:

Talk with family and friends.

They are a great source for information and advice. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Remember, being a parent is something you learn.

Read up on things you need to know.

There are many books on pregnancy and being a good parent. Check with your library or bookstore.

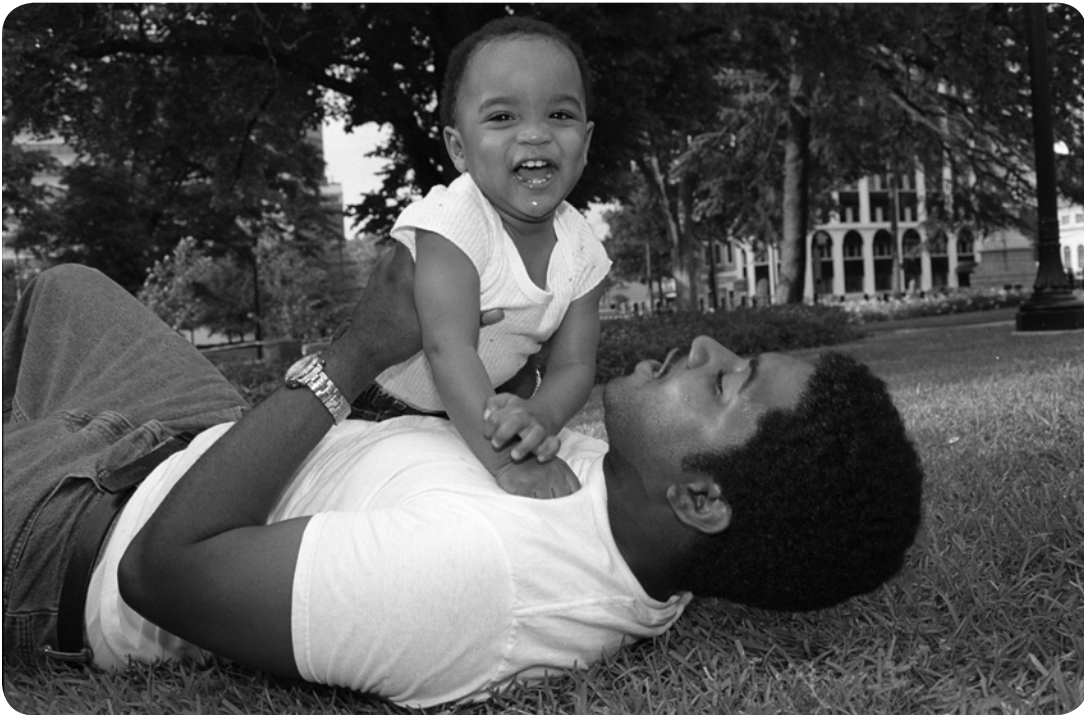
Take childbirth classes.

You and your partner can learn together what will happen during the pregnancy. Many hospitals offer free courses. Some private teachers give classes in their homes for a small charge. These classes can help answer any question you might have. They can also help you feel more confident about the pregnancy and becoming a parent.

Keep a good attitude.

Few things will teach you as much about yourself as becoming a father.

By being patient and keeping a good sense of humor, you are well on your way to being a good father.



Make Better Food Choices

Some foods have less food value per calorie than others. They are also often too high in sugar, fat, or salt (sodium chloride). You and your baby need lots of food value (nutrients) to be healthy. So choose foods with lots of food value per calorie.

Eat less of these foods:

Fast Foods: Hamburgers, Fried Chicken, Pizza, French Fries, Snack Chips, Soda Pop, Pastries, Rich Desserts

Eat more of these foods:

Fruit Snacks: Dried Apples, Dates, Raisins, Prunes, Pineapple, Apricots, Peaches, Frozen Unsweetened Cherries, Strawberries, Icy Melon Balls, Fruit Canned *in its own juice*, Ice Cold Fresh Fruit or Juice

Veggies: Raw Carrots, Celery, Broccoli, Zucchini, Cauliflower, Peppers, Cherry Tomatoes
**Use lowfat or fat-free dips or spreads with veggies.*

Nifty Nibbles: Whole Grain Crackers, Cheese, Unbuttered Popcorn, Unsalted Pretzels, Trail Mix, Nuts

Terrific Treats: Puddings (Mild, Rice or Bread), Custards, Lowfat Ice Cream, Lowfat or Nonfat Yogurts, Cookies made with whole wheat flour, Applesauce, Raisins, Nuts or Oatmeal
(Reduced sugar and fat in favorite recipes)

Read nutrition fact labels:

% Daily Value on label tells you if a food is high or low in a nutrient like sugar, fat, or sodium.

Nutrients		
Less than 5% of Daily Value	→	Poor Source
10-19% of the Daily Value	→	Good Source
20% or more of Daily Value	→	Excellent Source

Breastfeeding

Benefits for Baby

- Breast milk is the best food you can give your baby.
- Breast milk has all your baby needs for the first four to six months of life.
- Breast milk is clean, warm and ready to serve.
- Breast milk is easy for the baby to digest. Babies are less likely to have diarrhea.
- Breast milk helps prevent allergies and infections.
- Breastfed babies are less likely to be put in the hospital with illness.
- Breastfed babies have fewer skin rashes. They stay soft, smooth and nice smelling.
- Breastfed babies have stronger bones and teeth.

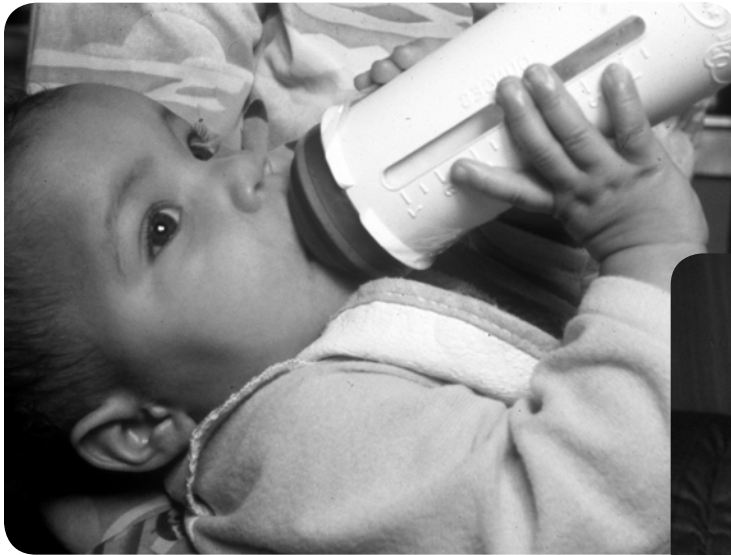
Benefits for Mother

- Breastfeeding helps the uterus return to its normal size.
- Breastfeeding helps the mother quickly return to her normal weight.
- Breastfeeding helps protect mother from breast and uterine cancer, and osteoporosis (brittle bones in later life.)
- Breastfeeding will save you time and money. You have no bottles or formula to buy or prepare.
- Breastfeeding is easy, no bottles to heat in the middle of the night.
- Breastfeeding will give you time to relax and enjoy a special closeness with your baby.



Bottle Feeding

- Iron Fortified baby formula is a good food to give your baby.
- Iron Fortified baby formula contains the nutrients your baby needs for the first four to six month of life. Your baby should stay on formula throughout the first year of life.
- Baby formula is sold in most drug and food stores.
- Baby formula is sold either as concentrated, powdered or ready to feed. You have to mix concentrated or powdered formula with water before giving it to your baby. If your baby is on WIC, you will most likely get concentrated formula.
- Bottles need to be prepared when using baby formula. Never warm baby formula in the microwave. Heating bottles in the microwave can cause “hot spots” in the formula. These “hot spots” can burn your baby’s mouth. Warm the formula by placing the bottle in a pan of hot tap water.
- Other people can feed your baby. Always hold the baby when feeding. Do not prop the bottle. Propping the baby’s bottle can lead to ear infections.
- Feeding time is a special time. It is a time to relax with your baby.



Additional Notes



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